



GREAT LAKES ATARI DIGEST



The Dearborn World of Atari – from a User Group Perspective

by Leo Sell

Was it lots of hype, or best thing to happen to Atarians in this area? Pretty hard to say. For me, there was much to like and much to regret. Much has been made in some quarters of shows that are "user group shows" or have funds accruing to user group coffers. But high-quality, user group sponsored shows are rare, and getting rarer.

The slack might be taken up by the World of Atari shows. And, if this show is any indication, user groups will be welcomed and involved in an integral manner. For good or bad, user groups provided much of the preceding publicity for the Dearborn show, 99% of the show staff, and all of the arrangements for promotional items (in this case hats and mugs). ST World, in return, offered the participating user groups vendor booths, well dispersed throughout the hall, and the opportunity to engage in any moneymaking enterprise they chose. We also got to rub elbows as equals with other vendors and developers.

Atari required a great deal of assistance. CHAOS volunteers donated at least 68 hours to Atari, with little thought to recompense or remuneration, even though great things were promised. John Nagy (of CHAOS and Z*Net), Ron Kovacs and Bruce Hansford (both of

Z*Net), and I, helped Chris Roberts of Atari set up until about 2:30 a.m. Saturday. That's after our own long rides and unloading.

Don't misunderstand. These statements are not made as complaints. The point is, a show like this is a lot of work – for EVERYONE. Now it's time to review whether it was worth it. For CHAOS, it's a mixed bag at this point. Our booth location, and having VIDI interfaces there to sell, coupled with a good booth location, resulted in good sales. On the other hand, we had enough mugs and hats made for this show AND the next one, and our entire treasury is tied up in those. The other user groups there, GAG, MAGIC, and GLASS, seemed to have busy booths but outside of GAG, I've not heard how satisfactory their sales and efforts were.

Probably the best part of the show for the user groups was talking to Sig Hartman and Chris Roberts and to register suggestions and complaints, and talking with developers and enjoying their company. A little camaraderie goes a long way to help improve our perspective.

There are definitely things I'd do differently another time, but it was time well spent and great exposure for the club. And after seeing and becoming much more aware of how things work in Atari Corporate, I think we all need to be freer in our letters and comments directly to Sam Tramiel. Nothing will be as effective as letting the top dog know about our concerns and what constructive suggestions we have for resolving them.

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Editor: Leo Sell
Production: John Nagy
CHAOS BBS (517) 371-1106

Great Lakes Atari Digest
Box 16132 Lansing, MI 48901

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HELP the CLUB... HELP YOURSELF!!



Publisher's Perspective

by John Nagy

As I write and re-write this column, I find I am angry. I have an inner conflict between what I feel should be said and how I think it will go over in Sunnyvale. It makes me angry to second-guess my own instincts in order to try to please the people I am writing about. Thus, I will go with my first feelings and share this with you.

Ron Kovacs, I, and others represented Z*Net and ZMAGAZINE at the World of Atari show in Dearborn just a few weeks ago. We wrote, edited, and uploaded a special issue of ST*ZMAG from the floor of the show after it closed Saturday. Working until midnight, CHAOS's Leo Sell, Malcolm Cleveland, and Steve Brooks added their own observations to what I considered to be an accurate, insightful, and on the whole positive overview of the first day of the show. Sunday morning brought recriminations of how we "tore up" the show.

Show promoter Richard Tsukiji was visibly livid, and Atari VP Sig Hartmann was uncharacteristically blunt. They spoke at length to both Ron and me, going over item after item in various articles. Overall, we were told in no uncertain terms that they believed many of our articles to be muckraking, that we were tearing down the World of Atari Shows and Atari Corp with it. One thing after another, from mentions of working late Friday in maddening heat to help Atari set up their booth, through to a story of how a dealer meeting was poorly attended and did not include the planned featured speaker, Mike Dendo, and culminating with the reporting that the major final advertising planned for the Free Press and News never happened - all these and countless more items were all identified as "things people don't have to know". We were told that the "little, insignificant things" we mention all work to create an overall negative image for Atari Corp. As enthusiasts, we "ought" to be doing all we can to accent the positive things and help Atari back into the spotlight. Why did we have to say how hot it was? Why did we have to say the meeting was poorly attended? And why talk about the missed ads at all? Can't we just say that there was a good show, lots of people came, and it was good for everybody? Don't we understand that if other groups read negative things, they won't go over as well in other locations, that dealer meetings will be discontinued, etc., etc...

I was almost convinced, as Sig is as great a convincer as ever made a sales pitch. Atari is trying hard to make a U.S. comeback, and I guess we could soften the edges some, in the name of promotion... even though I thought we were already WERE positive.

As we contemplated the exchange, the rest of the story came through. The phrase "If Sam saw this..." opened too many sentences. We were told that Atari President Sam Tramiel does not back losing programs, and that we may be destroying existing programs by publicising them with negative comments. Sig admitted in his

conference that advertising was heaviest in Southern California "where Sam could see it". It slowly became clear to me that "what Sam sees" and what Sam is led to believe is important to Atari corporate executive stability. Sam seems to "need protection" from the information we casually drop into our eyewitness reports. Executives, staff, and even outsiders jockey for position within Atari based on what they have Sam thinking, and frankly, we seem to be jeopardizing their plans by "needless" details, reported in online magazines and in group newsletters. It was also clear that those who write for Z*Net, ZMag, G.L.A.D. and other newsletters and magazines, are seen enthusiasts only - NOT as journalists reporting on and about Atari.

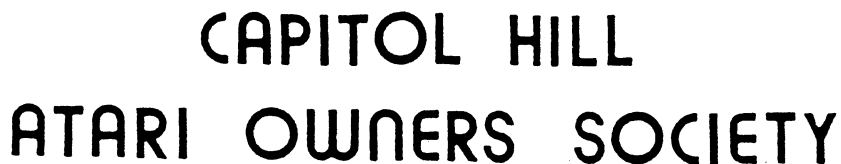
After they finished with us, Sig and Rich took the available user group officers aside for a similar "get positive" session. They stressed that it is the user groups' duty to themselves and their members to help Atari, and the way to do that is to keep newsletters upbeat, internal division, infighting, and open criticism of Atari just hurt everyone.

I DO agree with the spirit of the message, and admit that here in Michigan, internal disagreements in and between Atari groups have been painful and non-productive. And perhaps more of our criticism and concerns should be directed to Sam by personal letters, and less by way of newsletters. But frankly, I am afraid that Atari wants us to "get positive" as much to impress Sam Tramiel with what his staff is accomplishing as to help with the Atari image.

So, what do you, readers, want? Cheerleading and positive comments only, or reporting of facts and offering of opinions? We need to hear from you. I personally feel proud of our reporting, the good and the bad; not just balanced, but accurate. I want to let people know what it was like to be there - what was there, what was not, what was hoped for, promised, and what was delivered. I don't see that as negative or anti-Atari. And I still believe that it is GOOD for Sam to know how the world sees Atari, at least from the eyes of those who still care to observe it.

Lastly, let's not pretend that what any of us say is going to make anyone at Atari jump up and "see the light" and get with "our" program. But let's not play with what we see and think and feel, either. We writers and club officers ARE pro Atari or we wouldn't bother making it as much a part of our lives as we have. But, as in a good and committed marriage, honesty and openness is required. Hiding from problems has never made them go away, it only lets them grow into POLICY. Criticism can be positive too. Here's my re-commitment to ACCURACY, CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM, and HONESTY in my own reporting. It might not be exactly what Atari asked me for, and isn't much different from what I was doing all along, but it is what I feel is right.

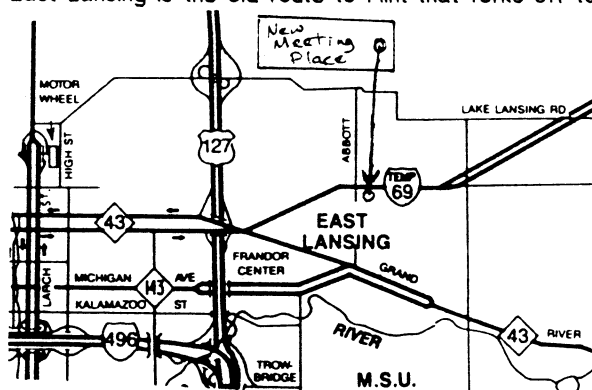
News of the Dearborn World of Atari show will be both in this issue of GLAD and next month's issue of Z*Net. Deadline for the Z*Net section this month fell before the show, so you will get to see it twice. It was worth double reporting, though. It was a good show, lots of people came, and it was good for everybody.



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ST Publ Libr	Chet Kapusinski		676-4539
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Please note our meeting place:Capitol Federal Savings and Loan, on Saginaw street (not Grand River) east of Abbott in East Lansing. Saginaw street going out of East Lansing is the old route to Flint that forks off to



the northeast near Frandor. The branch is just a few buildings East of Abbott, on the South side of Saginaw Street near the old Win Shuler's restaurant. Be sure to park AWAY from the building. The branch is open for business and we must leave the parking spots nearest the building open for customers.

We kicked off our new meeting place last month with an auction. It's a cozy room that makes a small crowd look big, and a big crowd look bursting. Sure helps fire up the optimism. As usual, there was more stuff to sell than time to sell it, so we'll finish this month. If you still have stuff to auction off, bring it along.

We're finally done with computer shows for a while. Doing three this spring and summer was a little much. For me, the reviews are mixed on all three, for different reasons. MAXIT, of course, is so oriented to the PC, that we always feel a little out in the cold. Of course, if we were more active in planning and helping with seminars and vendors (finding a few other willing Atari vendors from somewhere), we might be able to change that. MACE went better than I expected in a lot of ways, but I was disappointed in the way the user groups were

treated. It was promoted as a "user group" show, but the groups were badly placed and poorly treated. The World of Atari was a lot of work, for little reward to date. A further problem is that right now a most of the club's treasury is tied up from the show and we're doing our best to recover. The user groups were well enough treated, but the show seemed significantly less than we expected as far as number and types of vendors. More significantly, we got a look into the heart of Atari corporate politics. Interesting is the polite word.

I continue to believe there is room for optimism, but that Atari faces an almost overwhelming challenge in getting dealers and distribution. It seems such a shame to have such power available to the masses with no way for the masses to get it. Their further challenge is trying to deal with a group of passionate, sometimes surly, users - all of whom know just what Atari ought to do! Anyone want a job?

I talked with and met Chris Roberts, Atari's new user group and show coordinator. I am making an effort to be fairly positive in my comments, so suffice it to say that I am taking a wait and see attitude with the man. He seems quick to make promises, and there were significant communications and technical problems I've been witness to, so I'll just wait and see how it all works out. I will be curious to see what other user group officers think as they meet and deal with Chris. He's got a tough job, and I can only wish him luck.

I'd like to make a special note of thanks to John Nagy, who did much of the liason work between the clubs and ST World for the World of Atari show. He also designed the World of Atari logo and made arrangements for the caps and mugs (and the other user groups) sold at the show. John and I bat a lot of stuff back and forth, and do a lot of brainstorming, but usually John is the doer that gets it done. Thanks John!

I also need to express a great deal of thanks to a lot of people who helped out at the show - with the show, the CHAOS booth, and the Atari booth. Brian and Che Goluska, Malcolm Cleveland, and John Nagy all helped all day, both days. Lots of others helped one day or the other, including: Stephen Brooks, Mike Fildee (and his charming little daughter), Jonathan Chappell, Chris Drake, David and Jim Pendell, Jim Lathrop, Chet Kapusinski, Mike Ingram, Tom Rubino, Cuong Duong, and even Ron Kovacs and Bruce Hansford of Z*Net. Thanks to all of you for all of your hard work and assistance.

User group officers had a special meeting near the end of the show with Sig Hartmann and Rich Tsukiji. They weren't looking for any input from the officers. Instead almost all of the comments came from Sig and Rich. They very much want to encourage more optimistic and positive attitudes and reporting. Insofar as a positive view doesn't cover up the facts of Atari matters, I'm all for it. Sig especially asked that when given the choice

between the positive view and the negative view, that we take the positive view. Sounded a little like my wife, who is a poor optimist married to this cynical old pessimist, but we'll give it a try. Sig.

Sig also strongly encouraged a reconciling of the Michigan User groups. He, and Rich, both say they'd like to see MACE at the next World of Atari show, just like the rest of us. I'd like to see and end to the carping and fighting too. Perhaps now that both shows are over, the officers of MACE will feel less threatened and rejoin the mainstream of Atari user groups.

Well, I could rattle on and on, but there's other places to read news of the show and such. So, happy 4th of Atari!

CHAOS June Meeting Highlights

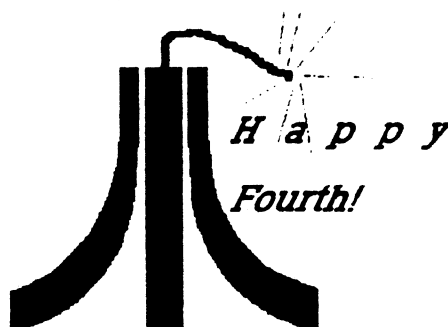
Well, if you missed the June meeting, you missed some real excitement. Atari Corporation sent several executives to help kick off our new meeting place (Capitol Federal, on Saginaw, east of Abbott). Executives in attendance included: Sig Hartman, Joe Mendolia, and Sam Tramiel. They showed us the STACY, the Portfolio, and gave a MEGA away to every member in attendance.

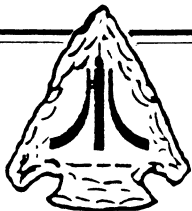
What! Hard to believe....o.k.. So I'm pulling your leg. What you did miss were some great deals on hardware and software as we christened the new meeting place with an Auction.

We started out with a madhouse of registration, announcements, and a call for volunteers for the World of Atari show. People responded well to the call and we were well represented there.

As for the rest of the meeting, the auction took up all the remaining time, and even then we didn't have time to sell everything there. Where do people get all this stuff??? Anyway, we'll take up where we left off in June, and finish the auction during the July meeting.

See you there, July 15, 10:00 a.m.





GENESEE ATARI GROUP

About GAG...

The Genesee Atari Group is a non-profit group of Atari owners in and around Flint, Michigan. Our purpose is to provide assistance to users of Atari personal computers. This organization is not affiliated with Atari, Inc.

GAG meets on the second Wednesday of the month at the Neithercut school, located at 2818 Crestbrook Drive, Flint. (Off Atherton between Hammerberg and Van Slyke). Meetings begin at 6:30 pm. All are welcome. GAG is a participating member of the Atari Interface Magazine, and members can purchase subscriptions at a greatly reduced rate. GAG is also affiliated with the Great Lakes Atari Digest, and members receive a free subscription with their membership. Membership is \$15 per year for the family.

GAG has an exceptional public domain library of 8- and 16-bit software. Contact one of the officers to receive a complete catalog. GAG also has a large magazine library for use by it's members, including Antic, Analog, ST-Log, Start, and several others.

We do not support piracy. Piracy is theft!

For more information contact:

The Genesee Atari Group PO Box E Flint, MI 48507

Name	Position	(313) Phone#
Jerry Cross	President	736-4544
Dave Pettit	Vice Pres.	232-0508
Ed Kalush	Librarian	(517) 288-4531
Gil Merciez	Librarian	
FACTS BBS		736-3920

Presidents Column

by Jerry Cross

Not much to report this month. Things are winding down for the summer and it's time to put away the 'puter and enjoy some fun and sun. The World of Atari show is now behind us, other shows are coming up and depending on our success in Detroit we will consider attending these other shows. Coming up are shows in Washington DC and Toronto!

The June meeting featured a great demo by Lew Stone of a new ST program called Battlechess. Judging from the reaction from the crowd I think this will be the big seller for this year. Lots of ooh's and aaah's and a very high "Oh WOW!" factor for that program!

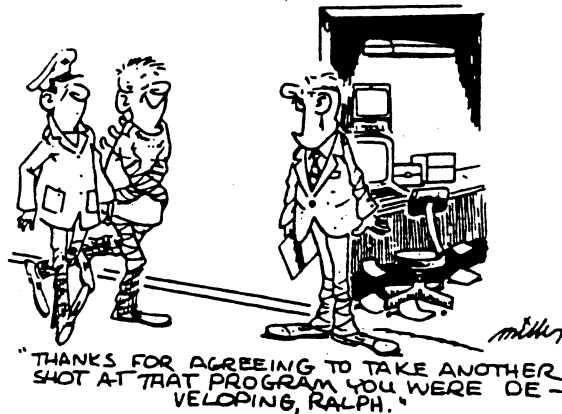
Remember that the next two meetings will be canceled due to the school being closed for the summer. The next meeting will be in September. Don't forget that public domain disks can be purchased either through the mail or from Discount Computers on Corunna Road. We have tons of new material we are sifting through and will probably have lots of new disks when we come back.

A final note, I am hoping to have a new bbs program running on FACTS within a month or so. Michtron has a new multi-line bbs program and if it does everything they promise I will switch over to it. The current bbs program (NiteLite) has driven me to the edge since I got it. So, check in once and a while and test it out!

Enjoy your summer, and I'll see you in two months!

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520ST with 520k memory (no RF Mod), and mouse (no monitor). Comes with 2-SF354 Single sided drives, and assorted software including dbMAN v4.0, Printmaster plus, DB Master filing program, Chestmaster 2000, Cyber Studio CAD-3D and more. \$350 or best offer, must sell! Call 313-736-4544 after 4:00 PM EST.



GAG DISK 251

Clipart Vol 17

A wide assortment of clipart in IMG format arranged in folders. Also includes an IMG Show program. DOUBLE SIDED DISK.

- **BABA**
Collection of 5 Meher Baba pictures.
- **CHRSTMAS**
28 Christmas images.
- **DROPCA**
300 DPI bold alphabet set with arrows, fists, asterisk, check and a blob.
- **HUMOR**
5 high quality misc images
- **L_CLIP**
8 misc images from Mac clipart
- **SPORTS**
31 sports oriented images
- **MISC**
Also includes computer oriented images and Max Headroom.

GAG DISK #252

Tiny Pics Vol 14

Another collection of Tiny pictures with a slideshow program. DOUBLE SIDED DISK

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FIGHTER .TNY	HOLE2 .TNY
MAP .TNY	MICKEY .TNY
MOONLIT2.TNY	NIXON .TNY
OPUSBILL.TNY	PENLUST .TNY
POR911 .TNY	PORCHE2 .TNY
REAGAN .TNY	ROSE .TNY
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LAND3 .TN1	LAND4 .TN1
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HARVEST .TN1	MADONNA .TN1
ROWHOUSE.TN1	SHUTTLEM.TN1
AMIGABLA.TNY	BOAT .TNY
GIRL3 .TNY	TOYOTVAN.TNY

GAG DISK #253

Aegis Animations Vol 2

Animations created using Aegis Animator. Includes player program. COLOR ONLY. DOUBLE SIDED DISK.

CARTOON1.SCR F CASTRO.SCR
HEADBOOM.SCR LOGO1 .SCR
VOLCANO .SCR WARTOWN .SCR
HEADROOM.SCR

GAG DISK #254

Uniterm & VanTerm

Updated versions of the two best public domain/shareware terminal programs for the ST. Loads of features that rival the commercial products. Includes complete docs. DOUBLE SIDED DISK.

- **UNITERM .PRG**
Version 2.0D. Great for mainframe communications.
- **VANTERM .PRG**
Version 3.6. Allows background file transfers and ability to run other programs from within itself.

GAG DISK #255

JIL2D

An elaborate 2D Cad drawing program. Shareware. Monochrome only but will run on color systems with the enclosed MONOVUE emulator. Documentation is sketchy but instructions are included for ordering complete documentation from the author. 1 MEG REQUIRED. DOUBLE SIDED DISK.

- **JIL2D .PRG**
- **MONOVUE.PRG**

GAG DISK #256

KID STUFF #1

A collection of games, activities, and educational programs for the kids. Most of this collection is geared toward the 8 and under crowd.

- **ABCD .PRG**
Fun with the alphabet.
- **BIBLE .PRG**
A matching game based on knowledge of the Old and New Testament.
- **CHILDPLA.PRG**
No docs but you should be able to figure out this fun drawing program. Press keys, buttons and move the mouse for an entertaining and colorful experience.
- **NURSERY4.PRG**
A collection of 9 games & activities. Completely mouse driven.
- **N_GO_RND.PRG**
Numerical Go Round. A math-oriented game that lets you set the parameters in solitary or team play. Very well done with nice graphics.
- **WEEGAMES.PRG**
A collection of activities & simple games for toddlers.
- **STORY 14.PRG**
Have fun customizing your own story of Little Red Riding Hood.

GAG DISK #257

Data Base Apps

A collection of general and specific database programs. DOUBLE SIDED DISK.

- **FREEBASE.TOS**
Generic file manager type program. Includes docs.
- **CLASS .PRG**
A spreadsheet like database for teachers. Includes docs.
- **AST_CHEF.PRG**
A menu database program with a starter collection of menus. Includes GFA Source code and documentation.
- **QUICK_DB.TOS**
A generic database that builds indexes for speed. Includes docs.
- **BOWLING .PRG**
Bowling secretary manager program. Includes GFA Source code and docs.
- **DBMAN .TUT**
A collection of files in this folder will guide you through some of the intricacies of DBMan, a DBase III+ clone. Includes sample forms.

GAG DISK #258

Games Vol 34

DOUBLE SIDED DISK

- **MAZER24 .PRG**
Creates and play with mazes
- **POKER .BAS**
Poker Dice Game in ST Basic.
- **SCORFOUR.PRG**
A graphically stunning version of the popular Score 4 game. Includes GFA source.
- **DEMO .PRG**
Playable demo version of the commercial game Realm of Gold from Magnetic Images.
- **BOLO .PRG**
Brilliant Arkanoid type game with over 50 different levels. Lots of action in this commercial quality arcade game from Germany.
- **STTACTOE.PRG**
ST version of Tic Tac Toe.

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GAG ST Library

Catalog Disk

Free Updates

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Reviews by Brian Goluska (CHAOS)

Turbo ST:

Tetris:

Populous:

Don't Worry, Be Happy:

ST Hardware Review

by Leo Sell (CHAOS)

If you have 2 monitors, as many owners do, get the Monitor Master. You'll be glad you did. Practical Solutions, 1135 North Jones Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85716, phone (602) 322-6100.



Telecommunications

TELECONNECT CALL BLOCKING UPDATE

by Jerry Cross (GAG)

Background

At the beginning of last year one of my bbs users uploaded a file he found on another bbs that he thought I would be interested in. It detailed the story of an Iowa bbs operator who discovered that Teleconnect, a long distance carrier, was blocking incoming calls to his bbs without his or the callers knowledge.

As an employee of Michigan Bell, I was very interested. I could not understand how a company could interfere with the transmissions of telephone calls, something that was completely unheard of with either AT&T or Michigan Bell in the past. The calls were being blocked, according to Teleconnect public relations officials, because large amounts of fraudulent calls were being placed through their system. Rather than attempting to discover who was placing these calls, Teleconnect decided to take the easy (and cheap) way out by simply block access to the number they were calling. But the main point was that a long distance company was intercepting phone calls. I was very concerned.

I did some investigating around the Michigan area to see what the long distance carriers were doing, and if they, too, were intercepting or blocking phone calls. I also discovered that Teleconnect was just in the process of setting up shop to serve Michigan. Remember, too, that many of the former AT&T customers who did not specify which long distance carrier they wanted at the time of the AT&T breakup were placed into a pool, and divided up by the competing long distance companies. There are a number of Michigan users who are using certain long distance carriers not of their choice.

My investigation discovered that Michigan Bell and AT&T have a solid, computer backed security system that makes it unnecessary for them to block calls. MCI, Sprint, and a few other companies would not comment or kept passing me around to other departments, or refused to comment about security measures.

I also discussed this with Michigan Bell Security and was informed that any long distance company that needed help investigating call fraud would not only receive help, but MBT would actually prepare the case and appear in court for prosecution!

My calls to Teleconnect were simply ignored. Letters to the public service commission, FCC, and other government departments were also ignored. I did, however, get some cooperation from our U.S. Representative Dale Kildee, who filed a complaint in my name to the FCC and the Interstate Commerce Commission. What follows is their summary of an FCC investigation to Mr. Kildee's office.

Dear Congressman Kildee:

This is in further response to your October 18, 1988 memorandum enclosing correspondence from Mr. Gerald R. Cross, President of the Genesee Atari Group in Flint, Michigan concerning a reported incidence of blocking calls from access to Curt Kyhl's Stock Exchange Bulletin Board System in Waterloo, Iowa by Teleconnect, a long distance carrier. Mr. Cross, who also operates a bulletin board system (bbs), attaches information indicating that Teleconnect blocked callers from access via its network to Mr. Kyhl's BBS number in an effort to prevent unauthorized use of its customers' long distance calling authorization codes by computer "hackers". Mr. Cross is concerned that this type of blocking may be occurring in Michigan and that such practice could easily spread nationwide, thereby preventing access to BBSs by legitimate computer users.

On November 7, 1988, the Informal Complaints Branch of the Common Carrier Bureau directed Teleconnect to investigate Mr. Cross' concerns and report the results of its investigation to this Commission. Enclosed, for your information, is a copy of Teleconnect's December 7, 1988 report and its response to a similar complaint filed with this Commission by Mr. James Schmickley, in accordance with the commission's rules, the carrier should have forwarded a copy of its December 7, 1988 report to Mr. Cross at the same time this report was filed with the Commission. I apologize for the delay in reporting the results of our investigation to your office.

Teleconnect's report states that it is subject to fraudulent use of its network by individuals who use BBSs in order to unlawfully obtain personal authorization codes of consumers. Teleconnect also states that computer "hackers" employ a series of calling patterns to access a carrier's network in order to steal long distance services. The report further states that Teleconnect monitors calling patterns on a 24 hour basis in an effort to control, and eliminate when possible, code abuse. As a result of this monitoring, Teleconnect advises that its internal security staff detected repeated attempts to access the BBS numbers in question using multiple seven-digit access codes of legitimate Teleconnect customers. These calling patterns, according to Teleconnect, clearly indicated that theft of telecommunications services was occurring.

The report states that Teleconnect makes a decision to block calls when the estimated loss of revenue reaches at least \$500. Teleconnect notes that blocking is only initiated when signs of "hacking" and other unauthorized usage are present, when local calls are attempted over its long distance network or when a customer or other carrier has requested blocking of a certain number.

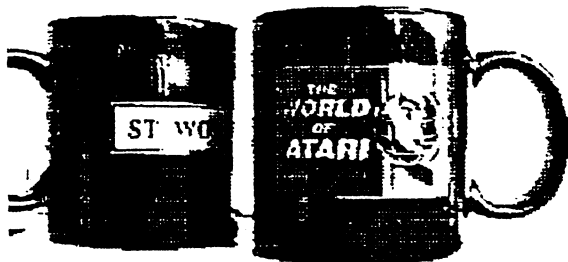
Developers were MIGRAPH, GRIBNIF, CODEHEAD, GADGETS BY SMALL, SIERRA ON-LINE, FAST TECHNOLOGY, SEYMOR RADIX, ICD, INTERSECT, MICHTRON, IMAGEN, REEVESOF, SOFTREK, DATAFREE, and ACCUSTAR. Rounding out the show were ZMAG/ST*ZMAG/ZNET, ST-WORLD Magazine, GENie Telecommunication service, ABACUS books and software, and the user group tables of CHAOS (Lansing), GAG (Flint), MAGIC (Detroit), and GLASS (Detroit).



Chris Roberts...

Friday night set the hectic tone for this show as the ZMAG crew assisted in the setup of many DTP systems with laser printers for ATARI. New User Group Rep Chris Roberts got his trial-by-fire as he struggled to organize the volunteers unboxing stacks of new Atari equipment til well after 1 AM, with the air conditioning OFF. Chris tells us that he is now responsible for Atari's presence at all user group and trade shows, and that there are 22 appearances yet this year that he has to make decisions about.

In intense heat and humidity, Saturday saw moderate lines waiting to enter at opening, but the crowd soon clogged all the aisles and the buying frenzy began. Vendors were VERY happy with sales. Overall, the user groups are doing well at the show. The CHAOS user group presented the VIDI-ST video digitizer, which caused a major traffic tie-up in the front aisle. Stocks they brought for sale nearly were exhausted at the end of the day... they plan to take mail orders on Sunday. The \$149 unit was a real crowd pleaser. GAG estimated that their disk sales were nearly \$1,000. All of the user groups were doing a brisk business with lots of literature and information being passed around. Person after person was seen leaving with World of Atari mugs and caps, available from user groups for only \$5.00 apiece.

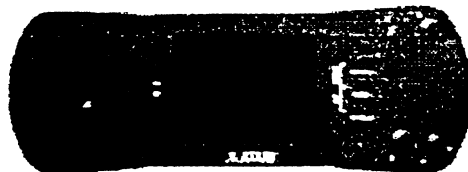


Atari had two sets of tables. Both U-shaped and facing each other with lots of space for curious onlookers. set

up for a great many people to flock around. Many of them were drawn by some impressive 8-bit images on 15 inch monitors: An XE Game system playing Bug Hunt, a 7800 game system and a Pole Position II cartridge (not working), an XE running an 80 column version of Atariwriter, a second XE game system with SX-Express at 1200 baud calling Genie, and two 65XE's running Beta Test Version of XE Maze, the 8-bit version of Midi Maze.

Also on display by Atari on some of the many DTP systems they had set up was Wordflair a very powerful word processor/database combination written for Atari by Blue Chip. There are also very simple paint and spreadsheet sections to boot. The word processor section is a virtual desktop publishing program with multiple windows within a page, image import capabilities, and the ability to let text flow from one window to another. You can also insert formulas and data directly from the database which is molded after Superbase. Due early 1990.

Notably missing from the Atari 8-bit and game area were the EPYX-made portable game systems. No explanation was offered other than "they aren't ready yet". It may be that they are simply too hard to hang onto in a show environment, being so small and attractive. It was rumored that one of the sample PORTFOLIOs was missing sometime before the show... and worse, that at the close of the Dearborn show, other Atari equipment was unaccounted for as well. The STACY laptop ST and the single Portfolio that was shown were kept within grab-distance of an Atari rep at all times!



ATARI
PORTABLE GAME SYSTEM

The PROTOTYPE Stacy LAPTOP ST almost didn't make it to the show at all! Stacy was entrusted to Chris Roberts, and he wisely took it aboard with him on the plane. The flight turned out to be an extremely rough one, and Stacy was bashed beyond belief! At 1 A.M. Dave and Sandy Small (of Gadgets by Small, makers of the MAC emulator SPECTRE and GCR) were asked "Could you please fix our baby?!" And fix they did. Dave and Sandy drove out to a local shopping center, and armed themselves with a variety of adhesives, epoxies, and sticky type substances. At 5 A.M. Stacy was once again in one piece, and in spite of her extensive surgery, apparently was no worse for the wear. As a partial pay

back for the fine job Sandy did, Atari allowed Gadgets to have the Stacy as a part of their booth Sunday morning. Sandy plugged in one of the prototype Spectre GCR's available in the Gadgets booth, said a small prayer, and booted the Stacy. The brownish screen (to be replaced with a nicer backlit one in production) glowed with the Spectre 128 menu after a few seconds of disk access. It proceeded to boot into the Mac mode without hassle, and soon Ready Set Go! and other fine Macintosh applications were floating across the LCD display. Sig Hartmann soon wandered into the Gadgets booth, and was, to say the least, ecstatic! He appeared to understand the potential of this event, and mentioned how great it would be if "they could bundle this thing" (the Spectre GCR and the Stacy). The GCR still can't be bought, but it will begin shipping in scant weeks. Rumors that legal actions by Data Pacific will delay or prevent the release are "totally false" say Dave and Sandy. Gadgets by Small, (303) 791-0253.

Saturday featured several seminars. Among them: Sig Hartmann; David Small; and programmer Dorothy Brumleve who spoke on kids and computers.

Where Saturday had plugged isles and heavy crowds much of the day, Sunday was a quieter but steady day. Shopping was more fun Sunday when you could actually get up to the tables and talk to the developers or dealers and get questions answered. Most dealers report higher sales with slower crowds for just that reason.

MIGRAPH was swamped by interested show-goers most of both days, demonstrating their new HAND SCANNER and interface delayed a few weeks, it was not available for sale). It really does an incredible job... up to 400 DPI directly into TOUCH-UP, Migraph's ever-more-full featured image editor. The new Migraph TOUCH-UP version 1.5 WAS ready, and was sold at the show. It has a number of handy new features that include BOLDING, ROTATE BY DEGREE of any defined area, an optional full-time enlargement window, and PAGED MEMORY (to hard drive) allowing creation and editing of images too large to be held in machine RAM. Details on upgrades and orders: Migraph, (800) 223-3729, or (206) 838-4677.

ABACUS of Grand Rapids, Michigan, introduced BECK-ERCAD ST, a professional CAD system that supports Postscript, HPGL, and GDOS output, 300 layer capacity, and more. Abacus also showed their line of fine books for every level and interest in the ST community. ABACUS, (800) 451-4319 or (616) 698-0330.

SOFTREK introduced yet another upgrade to TURBO-ST, called a "software blitter" by some. This new version is still faster, and even accelerates MEGA systems that DO have a blitter already. Release #1.57 is so new that the manual is still for 1.5, and 1.6 will be available in weeks. Improvements include significant compatibility and speed increases. For existing owners, the upgrade

is available for \$5 directly from Softrek, and FREE from participating dealers. The \$49.95 retail Turbo ST was available at the show for only \$35. Softrek, (407) 657-4611

Another show introduction was NEODESK version 2.04. Free updates were made at the GRIBNIF booth (so what DOES Gribnif mean, eh?) for users who brought their original disk with them. 2.04 supports the new large monitors plus adds a host of things, each small but a pleasure to the desktop alternative. Gribnif, (800) 999-GRIB or (413) 584-7887.

CODEHEAD brought a unique new UTILITIES package for \$29.95, plus an upgrade of the HOTWIRE desk alternative. Both were new at this Dearborn show.

Shown for the first time "for real" was the DVT VCR hard drive backup system from Seymour Radix.

Michtron did NOT have Fleet Street Publisher Version 3.0 for sale at the Dearborn World of Atari, but George Miller was proud to show it to anyone who asked. It adds the "must-have" features like multiple pages, master pages, vector graphics, and much more to the solid base of Fleet Street 2.0. When released (said to be a month or two away), it will be available as an upgrade at additional cost for 2.0 owners. Meanwhile, consider buying or upgrading to Fleet Street Publisher Deluxe, which now includes ULTRASCRIP for a total price of only \$199.95. That's less than Ultrascript alone! Michtron, (313) 334-5700.

Sunday wound down with a considerable number of giveaways from Rite-Way (a Detroit dealer) and others. Seminars included a standing-room performance by Darek Mihocka who offered special new versions of his QUICK series of utilities, and discussed his popular ST-Xformer 8-bit emulator.

While the enthusiasm and attendance are NOT what we hoped at this show, spirits are higher than one might expect in this heat wave. Part of the problem with the show has been publicity... while this show was expected to have plenty of mass media advertising, the last minute blitz never occurred. Organizer Richard Tsukiji had told us to expect major ads in the DETROIT NEWS and FREE PRESS, but they did not materialize. As a result, the show has mostly "preached to the choir", pleasing the faithful to a great degree but doing little to reach out to the general public.

The World of Atari goes next to Dallas/Fort Worth on August 19-20, where Richard Tsukiji says the vendor list already surpasses the Detroit area show. This will be the first major Atari show in Texas, so you can expect it to be BIG. It's how they do things down there, y'know. Info: Exhibitors (503) 673-2259, reservations/air/hotel (800) 842-9034.

Photos by John Nagy with the VIDI-ST system.



Just Starting

Absolute Beginners

by Lew Stone from Discount Computers (GAG)

If you use a disk drive you are using a DOS (pronounced DAWHSS), the first letters of the words "Disk Operating System". Most computers don't work too well without a DOS. You can't save a program to a disk without it. Neither can you make backups, call up info from a disk, nor can you format a disk. If you ignore DOS your computer will ignore you.

When mini computers were first introduced there were a lot of 'bugs' in their DOS. As newer editions became available there were fewer and fewer 'bugs' in the operating system.

The older DOS would place info on a disk using fewer tracks made up of fewer sectors each. As better media became available newer DOS became available that would squeeze more sectors onto a track. You could run the older programs if you did some disk swapping.

Almost all Atari 8-bit disks come with a DOS already on

it. The major exception is a 'data' disk. Sometimes a non standard DOS is used and the usual DOS commands will not work. Most IBM computers have a separate disk for DOS which has to be used before a program is loaded in. In general the Atari is more user friendly than such a system.

The Atari ST series computers originally had their DOS (which they call "TOS") on a disk for load just like the 8-bit line, but it was soon provided in a chip internal to the machine. Thus, an ST can BOOT without a disk, or with only blank disks. While this is an operational advantage, it makes revising the TOS an expensive and troublesome affair. TOS 1.4 has been delayed for well over a year while it is revised again and again. SpartaDos-X is a new cart for the 8-bit computers that does essentially the same thing, allowing diskless boots. However, both the ST and SpartaDos-X look for user-supplied custom startup information that ought to be on a disk in the drive at boot time.

Each system has it's own DOS commands which are reserved words that have a special meaning to that system (CATALOG or DIR, SAVE, LOAD, DELETE, FORMAT, or INIT. Use these last two with great care. Either will destroy any information on a disk, making it blank and like new. Each DOS is unique, and understanding the one you use is absolutely essential to success in using your computer. Break down and READ THE DOCUMENTATION for a change!



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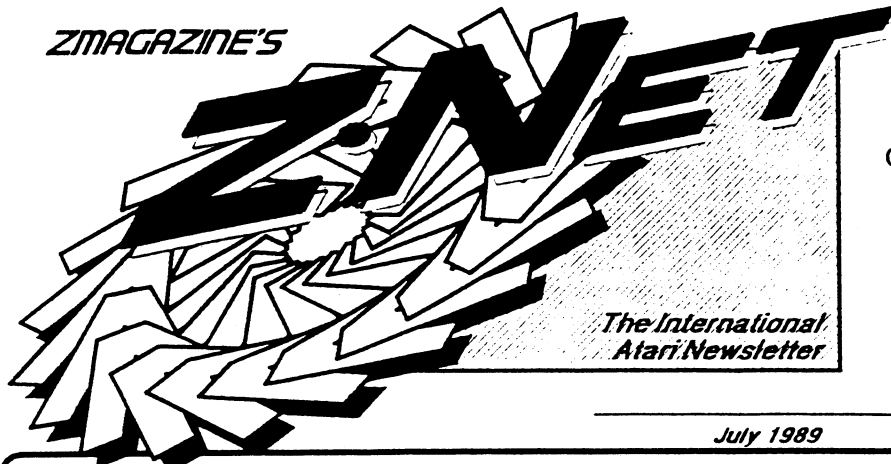
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July 1989

Vol. 1 No. 5

ATARI and the Consumer Electronics Show

by Mike Lechman and the Z*Net Staff

In a hastily called press conference that drew no more than 35 people, Atari Corp's Sam Tramiel introduced the (not yet named) Atari Portable Color Entertainment System. It was Saturday, June 3rd, at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, a preview of what we'll see on store shelves around Christmas time. The Atari game unit, which was a well guarded secret until the press conference, is powered by 6 AA batteries or AC adaptor, or (optionally) 12 volt auto adaptor. Developed by Epyx and built and marketed by Atari, it is designed to compete directly with Nintendo's newly introduced "Game Boy", also a hand-held game unit. CES fills Chicago's massive McCormick Place and adjacent McCormick Place West, and Nintendo occupied over 30% of the West facility, the largest booth in CES history.

Atari, on the other hand, was again criticized by some as having a generally lackluster display "encampment", although large and well placed. Nevertheless, the new Atari game was the immediate hit of the press, and has appeared in newspapers, network TV, and even on MTV. It has a 3.5" color LCD screen (160 x 102 pixels) capable of over 4,000 colors on a unit about the size of a video cassette. It has four-channel sound and comes with stereo headphones for private enjoyment too. A jack also allows interconnection with up to eight other units for group play. Games come on a 128K credit card sized cart, and can be loaded into the unit memory then removed for loading into the next in the connected chain, allowing a group to play with only a single cart. Software will allow each player a private point-of view while playing. The Atari Portable Color Entertainment System (I hope they name it soon!) runs a 65C02 CPU at 16Mhz. Stories of Nintendo officials calling the Atari machine "overkill, like driving a Ferrari to the grocery store" were met by Sam Tramiel with "I'd rather drive a Ferrari ANYWHERE, besides, we don't have a Ferrari price!"

Atari has six titles ready, including Impossible Mission, Blue Lightning, and California Games. Game prices will stay in the \$20-\$35 range. The new game machine also features a 180 degree function which allows a lefty to play the unit easily. It will come with carrying case and strap. The unit is tentatively set to retail for \$149.95, although the price may change in response to Game Boy's suggested list of \$89.95. We should see it on store shelves as soon as September.

Atari also announced an under-\$200 68000 based game machine to be introduced "first quarter, 1990". Additionally, Atari showed the Atari PC-4, a 286-AT clone (with 3.5" disk drive and 30 meg HD), being delayed by FCC approval due to non-standard case configuration. Also shown at the press conference was the Atari Portfolio.

Emphasis in the Atari booth was on software, including the 2600, 7800 and XE systems. The 7800 system will see the bulk of the new titles, to include Commando, Tower Toppler, Double Dunk, Jinx, Xenophobe, Airball, and more. The 2600 will also see some of these titles and more of its own. The biggest announcement for the 8-bit community was the soon to be release of XE-MIDI MAZE. Developed by James Yee of Xanth Software, this version will interface with the ST version, and can also be played by modem (or by GENie, as Mr. Yee offered!). Also coming for the 8-bit is Deflektor and Zenophobe.

Atari had a large display of calculators. Most were in common type configurations--solar, printing, and "artsy". Atari indicated it's desire to become a major player in the calculator market. Observers have commented that Atari has begun a trend of marketing other people's products... calculators, the MIDI HOTZ machine, and now the Epyx game system. Stock market reaction to the new product announcement was marked-up \$2 to \$8 a share after many months of no change. ■

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ROVAC Industries, Inc.
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MANAGING EDITOR Ron Kovacs
PRODUCTION Bruce Hanford
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☞ Last month, Atari was on display at the CEPS show, a special national desktop publishing show. Sig Hartmann, Jay Crosby, Rich Marlow and Karen Bowen were on hand. We were told that the 1040 DTP system was not that big of a hit, while the Portfolio and new PC4 got plenty of attention.

☞ Atari is rumored to be announcing a pair of new machines (in addition to the portable game system mentioned in detail on this month's Z*NET front page) on August 25. One is expected to be another game system, probably a high-end unit (also rumored NOT to be ST-compatible), and the other is to be a new serious computer. This might be, finally, the 68030 "TT" computer that has tantalized the press for over a year. We will follow this story in ST*Zmag and ZMAG online at your favorite telecommunications service.

☞ Several Japanese computer magazines are claiming that a laptop version of the Atari ST computer with a Japanese language feature will debut in Japan this Summer, and support the claim with a mock-up photograph. An Atari Japanese spokesman said the outside of the basic Atari ST laptop and the inside specifications are under consideration. Prices will exceed \$1,400.00.

☞ A new book called "The Software Encyclopedia 1989: A Comprehensive Guide to Software Packages for Business, Professional or Personal Use," published by R. R. Bowker. Price is just \$179.95 listing 20,000 software titles. The brands covered within the publication include IBM, Commodore, Atari 8/16 bit, CP/M, Unix, Tandy and Texas Instruments. This two volume release has full descriptions on all software listed.

☞ Now run your original TOS in ROM or simply switch to the new Atari TOS 1.4 or any other TOS chip! The SOS upgrade consists of a socketed board with an external switch. The special introductory price is only \$70, with a suggested retail of \$99.00. This offer expires August 30. Bill's Designs, 1246-A Nike Street, Huntsville, Alabama 35808 or call (205) 837-4018

☞ 1st STOP Computer Systems Ltd. recently announced four new price leading ST disk drives. The new drives include a matching pair of drives in metal cabinets, one is a 3.5" drive and the other is a 5.25" drive, both double-sided. The units are stackable and have a custom switcher cable option available (free if you buy both units). These units will retail for \$219.95 but are available for an introductory price of \$169.95. 1st STOP Computer Systems, 7085 Corporate Way, Dayton, OH 45459. 1-800-252-2787.

☞ Rich Tsukiji of ST-World announced another World of Atari show. The third show of the tour is scheduled for August 19th and 20th in Dallas Texas at the Holiday Inn Holidome. Additional shows currently under consideration are Seattle Washington in October, and a return to Anaheim California in early 1990. ST-World (503) 673-2259.

☞ InterSect Software, the developers of InterLink, will be releasing Masterlink this month. Masterlink operates with all dialing, file transfers, scripts and mini BBS as background tasks. You can exit, enter other programs while the background tasks are running. It will be available as an upgrade to registered Interlink owners. Also, look for a new game called "War of the Warriors" from InterSect by Christmas. 800-826-0130 or 801-923-

8774.

☞ The WAACE group from the Washington/Maryland area has announced an AtariFest for October 7th and 8th. This is the same area where Current Notes originates. Details as the become available.

☞ Bob Klaas of Utah has bought the rights to the SUPRA hard drive interface for the 8-bit Atari. He has begun production again and now calls it the K-P Hard Drive Interface. It will sell for \$110 plus shipping. The Supra sold at \$149, and the K-P will be identical right down to the case. You will have to supply your own drive, controller, and power supply as before. It will operate with an XL or XE machine by attaching to the expansion bus, and the XE adaptor is another \$15 (plus handling). K-Productions, 801-966-1697.

☞ Ginny Teal of Avant Garde recently told Z*Net that their new product PC-Ditto II appears to be physically incompatible with most or all of the hardware accelerator boards that have introduced this year. For example, the \$99.00 JRI Accelerator has an additional circuit board covering the replacement 68000 chip. As the PC-Ditto IBM emulator board must mount directly on top of the 68000, this prevents the use of both systems. Avant Garde's primary focus at this point is to get the hardware out and worry about other hardware interfacing at a later date. PC-Ditto II is experiencing small production delays which will postpone the commercial introduction by not more than a month. Production should begin in early July.

☞ The Atari Portfolio pocket PC will not be appearing in the black color shown in the prototype. Z*Net has been told that black plastic produces an unsatisfactory finish. The production units

are going to be dark gray. At least one prospective major distributor is pushing for additional production of the hand held computer in assorted pastel colors.

☞ ANTIC MAGAZINE, the long standing 8-bit Atari specialty mag, has announced that they are discontinuing their no-disk release, and existing subscriptions must be changed over to mag-and-disk (at a 1/2 reduction of the outstanding subscription) or be cancelled. The move may help or hurt Antic, whose disks were widely shared by magazine-only subscribers previously.

☞ A 24-year-old West German computerist apparently committed suicide after being accused of using his expertise to provide Soviet KGB agents with stolen access code and passwords to gain access to Western computers. Police say the body of a man found burned to death, has been identified as the individual under investigation in connection with the computer scandal that came to light last March. The German apparently doused himself with gasoline and set himself on fire. The investigation of others involved is continuing.

☞ In a recent Computer Shopper article, Practical Solution's phone number was printed in error, and in our most recent issue of Z*Net we printed the same wrong number. The correct number is: 602-322-6100. In our report of the MACE Show, we listed the WAUG user group as being from Westland Michigan. They are actually based in Ann Arbor. We pulled the misinformation from the MACE Show Program, and we apologize on behalf of MACE and our error. WAUG stands for the Washtenaw County Atari Users Group. ■



RATTY'S RAP

by Matthew Ratcliff (Mat⁴Rat)



Atari's new hand held game machine, affectionately called Game Pro by some, is garnering a LOT of attention. Some of you may have heard of a similar offering from Nintendo called the Game Boy. Does Atari's offering stack up? YES! Absolutely!

The Game Pro, at 160x192 pixels, has a higher resolution than the Game Boy. The Game Pro can display 16 colors, out of a palette of 4096. The Game Boy? How about 4 exciting shades of grey? But, golly, the Game Boy can be EXPANDED to allow two players to compete over an add on modem. Can the Game Pro do that? NO! It's BETTER!!! Let's say you have a new Game Pro, and a hot new game, and SEVEN FRIENDS just dying to play too. No sweat. Plug all the Game Pros together, daisy chain style - simpler than adding peripherals to the Atari XE home computer. Player one inserts his new game card, loads the software, removes the card, and passes it on to the next player. Within moments 8 kids, standing on a street corner, waiting for the morning bus, are screaming with delight, dancing a funny little jig that only hard core coin op arcade fanatics will recognize! Oh, sound? The Nintendo Game Boy has stereo sound. Oh, wow. The Atari Game Pro has FM, 4 CHANNEL, STEREO sound and it comes with stereo headphones. This is one extremely HOT TOY! But, Atari doesn't deserve all the credit. According to some reports, this game machine was designed by Epyx and purchased outright by Atari. It's an extremely shrewd tactic on the part of Atari, to make the FIRST and BEST move in a market that Nintendo is working toward. But, Atari bought this completed product design so they could MARKET it themselves. What is the LAST PRODUCT Atari has marketed properly and completely successfully in the United States? Can you say 2600? I knew you could! Right now all we need is software! I think a lot of worried Commodore 64 software developers are drooling over the prospects of this extremely cool toy.

Is the 8bit dead? Not in the eyes of Atari. The company no longer pushes the hardware. It sort of sells itself, at a rather slow but extremely steady pace. I know of nearly a dozen NEW titles, including some HOT coin op properties, being developed for XL, XE, and XEGS owners. All you 400/800 owners need to wake up and smell the coffee. Nearly ALL new game cartridges from Atari do NOT run on 48k 400/800 machines. In other words, Atari no longer supports these machines. I suggest that you upgrade to an XEGS or 130XE soon if you are interested in running any of the new software.

Xenophobe for the XEGS was demoed at CES. Although it's graphics aren't quite as slick as the 7800 version, it is more playable. All Atari versions of Xenophobe simply BLOW AWAY the Nintendo implementation, however. Once the Nintendo is stretched beyond it's basic strengths (running, jumping, climbing games) it's flaws begin to show. Tower Toppler is coming to the 8bit very soon, too. We should see between 4 and 8 ALL NEW cartridges for the 8bit Atari by the end of 1989. And Atari is committed to producing another 4 to 8 games for the XEGS in 1990 as well.

Applications? Where are the applications? Well, somebody slipped up (sound familiar?) and allowed Atari to completely run out of Atariwriter Plus. It seems odd that Atariwriter 30 would start shipping at about the same time. However, I have been assured by two sources within Atari (that's on the TRAMIEL SIDE of that revolving door) that a

new production run of Atariwriter Plus is being made.

Although I have been assured DOZENS OF TIMES by John Skruch that Atari has the XES2001 light gun in stock, ready to ship to dealers, no one in the US has ever seen this package. This is supposed to be a light gun and the Bug Hunt game in a \$30 package. I was told over 6 months ago that "they are in stock, right here in our warehouse". My dealer has asked for it repeatedly. I've talked to half a dozen other sources at Atari and no one knows anything beyond the ONE TASK that is his primary function at the company. If you want a light gun, buy one for the SEGA and hack it. There is a 3rd party company supplying light guns for the Amiga, Commodore 64, and, yes, even the Atari 8bit home computers. Antic has a review of it in the works.

Are you looking for Educational Software? Unicorn software used to put out a very nice line of educational products for the ST. Atari liked their offerings and bought the entire line. Dealers haven't been able to get the product since. Why? Was Atari simply gobbling up the competition to Bently Bear's educational series, or did someone drop the ball in production and marketing AGAIN?

Although getting support out of Electronic Arts for the ST is nearly impossible, they do continue to distribute First Byte software. First Byte produces a line of "smooth talker" educational software geared toward small pre-schoolers, employing digitized speech.

If you have children between the ages of 2 and 5 I can HIGHLY RECOMMEND "Mixed Up Mother Goose", from Sierra On Line. My boys, ages 3 and 5, love this uncomplicated, and subtly educational adventure, in which all of the Mother Goose rhymes are mixed up. The child controls a character with a mouse, keyboard, or joystick to collect items and people and deliver them to the proper location to complete the nursery story. Hints are given in text and graphical form, so junior doesn't have to be able to read to play. The graphics, and animation sequences are quite well done, with charming music. The animation presented for completing a nursery rhyme is the reward for a job well done, and my children want to see them over, and over again.

Well, after puzzling over the cost of an Amiga for several months, I finally bit the bullet and bought another ST! I got a deal I just couldn't refuse. Will I abandon the 8bit? I certainly don't intend to. Software trickles in for me to review, and I still have a few TALKING program ideas to develop. But, I want to get back into some more progressive languages like C and Pascal, on a REAL 16 bit microprocessor.

Does anyone have an idea for a useful utility or small application for the 8bit? I've got some educational software in the works, but they entertain young children. I've written DIR3, 3 across directory lister, and FTYPE, fast file typer, utilities for Analog. TALKEYS hooks 8k of speech data and assembly language into the RAM under your XL/XE/XEGS internal BASIC. Then, whenever you press a key, your computer TELLS YOU what key you typed. It's a handy utility for data entry, and also for little kids learning to recognize letters and numbers. Do you have any suggestions? Drop me some EMAIL on GENIE (MAT.RAT), or Delphi (MATRAT). Or you can use the PMAIL (postal mail). Send your ideas, comments, flames, rebuttals, etc. to: Matthew Ratcliff, Ratware Softworks, 32 S. Hartnett Ave., St. Louis, MO 63135. ■



Atari Corporation has at last filled the position of User Group Coordinator by hiring Chris Roberts. Chris will also be handling all coordination of Atarifests and show appearances. The position was previously held by Cindy Claveran, and Sandy Austin before her, but had included developer support duties that made the job nearly impossible.

Chris comes to Atari with first hand experience in user groups. He was president of the P.A.L.A.C.E. user group (Pasadena Area Local Atari Computer Enthusiasts) in southern California for two years. He was involved with the Glendale Southern California Atari Faire, and ran his own BBS, The Dragon. He has extensive experience in 8-bit Ataris, and is a proficient programmer favoring Basic XE on the 8 and True Basic on the ST. A number of Chris's original 8-bit games are still available on GEnie and CompuServe. His articles on Spectre 128 have been published in ST-Xpress, and he also worked for The Federated Group. Most recently, Chris was employed by Hughes Aircraft doing computer work. He currently has a program for the ST under submission to ARTWARE, an ST developer. Chris is 32, a native Californian, and is married with 3 children aged 2, 5, and 6.

This is good news for Atari 8 bitters, for at last they truly have "one of their own" inside Atari, helping on the front line. User group officers will appreciate knowing that Chris has already shared their path. He knows the trials of running a group!

Z*Net spoke with Chris for nearly two hours on his first day at Atari (June 12) and we were really impressed with his energy and enthusiasm for his new job. He has a lot of ideas to improve the support of user groups. He indicated that Atari is dedicated to improving their support of user groups, and wants to improve their communications with them. He repeated Sam Tramiel's request of last year, that groups can best help Atari right now by approaching dealers and trying to get them interested in ATARI. It will be easier and more attractive to be an Atari dealer than ever before.

We asked Chris if he felt insecure knowing the history of rapid turnover at Atari, and he laughed and said he was already too busy to worry about anything but work. He feels he has a lot to offer Atari and the user groups, and expects to be around a long time. One of the projects he hopes to see implemented is a multi-level state, regional, national, and even international network of user groups, independent of Atari but in close association with it. Chris expects that a group should be able to be as small as five people and still be recognized. The only other requirements he thinks should be relevant are monthly meetings and bylaws with a strong anti-piracy clause.

Chris hopes to get a developer's kit and access to a private area on GEnie telecommunications network for each registered club. The special SIG there will offer a place to get the newest information direct from Atari as well as keep groups in close communication. Other plans are to revive the User Group Newsletter on an every-other-month basis... without fail. That may be a tall order, as Chris will go to EVERY consumer event that Atari is involved with! Look for him at Atarifests and World Of Atari shows!

In our conversation there was a real note of pride in Chris's voice when asked about his office equipment. "I've got a Mega ST, and the original prototype Atari Laser printer! What a piece of history! They had planned to put in a font cartridge, apparently, 'cause there's a slot on the printer for it. No cartridge, but the printer still works great!!!" Who else but a diehard Atari user would get excited about that printer? "This

job is a dream come true for me", he said. "I've been after Sig Hartmann for some time for this position. Every time there has been an opening, I've been on the phone asking for the position. I finally got it!"

Chris stressed that he had stacks of mail to go through that had accumulated since Cindy left, and that the existing database of user groups was almost unusable and very incomplete. He asked EVERY GROUP to PLEASE send him a card with their group name, official address, president's name and phone number. Including a newsletter is optional. Even if your group registered last year, PLEASE send it in again... so many groups did not register last year, some due to the questions about a dealer sponsor, that Chris just would prefer to start over. Send to: Chris Roberts, User Group Coordinator, Atari Corporation, 1196 Borregas Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94086.

Of course, you could always call him him at Atari, his phone number is (408)745-2052. This is a direct line to him. Soon you will also be able to reach him on GEnie.

As the main interface of the User and Atari, Chris promises that he will always be honest with the public. "If I don't know the answer to a question, that's what I'll say, I won't make something up, and I will try to find the real answer," he stated. Items Chris passed on to us in our first talk included: No MEGA 1 or 6 in the USA... FOR SURE; there is serious discussion again about offering the BLITTER upgrade for the 520 and 1040; the upswing of national advertising is REAL, with major campaigns coming in top magazines to help inspire dealer and buyer confidence; and the products to be announced by Atari on August 25 will be EXCITING.

Z*Net looks forward to a great relationship with Chris and Atari, and offer our Congratulations and Best Wishes, Chris! ■

NEW ST SOFTWARE ANNOUNCED AT CES

Compiled by Mike Lechun

Broderbund (415) 492-3200 showed versions of The New Print Shop, adds and improves many features, ST version is about ready.

Spectrum Holobyte (415) 522-3584 announced scenery/mission disks for Falcon. VETTE, a new game, will be out in '90, offering you the chance to cruise San Francisco in one of four custom Corvettes.

Taito (604) 984-3344 announced Arkanoid II-Revenge of Doh, Operation Wolf, Rambo III, and Qix. 4th Quarter will see the introduction of Rastan.

Capcom (415) 956-1791 offers for the ST: Last Duel, Side Arms, LED Storm, Black Tiger, Forgotten Worlds, Ghouls & Ghosts, and Strider.

Tengen (408) 435-2650 is the Atari Games home entertainment division. For the ST they will offer Blasteroids (a 3-D Asteroids), Vindicator, APB (8/89), Xybots (10/89) Spinnaker (617) 494-1200 announced Star Goose and Quadralien.

Data East (408) 286-7074 signed a working agreement with ABC (TV) Sports, and will release sports games for the Nintendo, its primary focus. For the ST, there is/will be: Robocop, Batman (from the movies); also Vigilante, Super Hang On, and Bad Dude.

Mindscape (312) 480-7667 proposed Gauntlet II, Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun, Harley Davidson: Road to Sturgis ('90); Afterburner (fly an F-14), Shinobi, and Balance of Power- the 1990 Edition (by Chris Crawford). ■

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BEYOND GEM!

Paying Attention to Events (Part 2)

by Douglas Hodson



Last month we covered the mouse button event handling part of the `evnt_multi()` function. We discussed the variables "event_types", "clicks", "button", "state", "bptr", "kptr" and "times". Seven down, sixteen more to go! This month we continue with `evnt_multi()` and start with a reprint of the function prototype.

```

evnt_multi(
event_types,           /* event types */
clicks, button, state, /* mouse button info */
m1_in_out, x1, y1, w1, h1, /* 1st rectangle info */
m2_in_out, x2, y2, w2, h2, /* 2nd rectangle info */
buffer,               /* message buffer addr */
lowtime, hightime,    /* timer info */
xptr, yptr,           /* mouse coordinates */
bptr,                 /* mouse button state */
kptr,                 /* keyboard state */
key,                  /* key code info */
times);               /* times mouse state occurred */

```

Ten more variables can be knocked off if we now discuss the mouse rectangle monitoring events. The function that exclusively monitors these type of events is `evnt_mouse()`. By setting "m1_in_out" and "m2_in_out" to specified values, you can have `evnt_multi()` monitor the entry or exit from two different screen rectangles. The coordinates are given by "x1", "y1", "w1" and "h1" which define, respectively, the x point, y point, width and height of the rectangle. The second rectangle is specified by the "x2" set of variables.

Let's look at a quick and hopefully informative example. Have you ever wanted to make your own icons? Here's one way of handling them with mouse events. To keep things simple let's stick with "controlling" one icon. First we draw the icon on screen with a VDI function like `vro_cpyfm()`, the copy raster from routine. We must keep track of the coordinates of where we drew the raster. These coordinates will be input into `evnt_multi()`, for monitoring that rectangle on screen. If we set "m1_in_out" to zero, then an event will be triggered when the mouse pointer enters the location where the icon is displayed. If "m1_in_out" is set to one, then event is triggered when mouse leaves the rectangle of the icon.

Since most GEM programs are centered around `evnt_multi()`, we simply wait for the mouse to enter the icon area (or rectangle), then jump to a routine that handles icon movement and/or selection. A simple routine would wait for the mouse pointer to either leave the area and also watch to see if the user single or double clicks the mouse. If the user presses the mouse button down without releasing, then he or she wishes to "drag" the icon to a new location. Remember last month we discussed dragging by testing "bptr"! If the user double clicks then he or she wishes some action to take place.

The procedure just mentioned is one way of handling icons. This technique can be extended for two icons by using the second rectangle. More icons can be handled, but more

work involved, remember GEM can only monitor two rectangles at a time. Take note, the `form_do()` source code mentioned several issues ago has routines for monitoring several rectangles! The code was needed to monitor all the selectable objects in a dialog box. A side note: Digital Research has considered adding a feature to GEM where a list of rectangles to monitor can be specified. Unfortunately we will probably never see this on the ST, only the PC version of GEM.

The next set of variables are related to timer events. The "lowtime" and "hightime" variables contain the low word and high word of the time interval, in milliseconds, that it takes to generate a time-out event. If you want a timer event to be generated in 1 second, you would set "lowtime" to 1000 and "hightime" to 0 (remember 1000 milliseconds is 1 second). A time-out might be used if you wanted your program to go into some demo mode if the user has been inactive for a period of time.

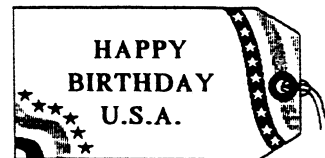
The three variables "xptr", "yptr" and "kptr" always return useful information regardless of which events were specified by "event_types". "xptr" and "yptr" will specify the mouse pointer coordinates when the event was triggered and "kptr" returns the keyboard state of the control, alt, and shift keys OR'd together, as follows:

```

0x0 all keys up
0x1 right shift key down
0x2 left shift key down
0x4 control key down
0x8 alt key down

```

We have hit them all except the "buffer" variable, which is a 8 word array which returns messages to the programmer. It is related to the message events generated by GEM. For a more complete discussion of this essential event to understand, I'm going to delay it's discussion until a later article. ■



THE CLUB ROOM - Doing an AtariFest

by Jerry Cross - Genesee Atari Group (GAG), Flint Michigan

*[Each month THE CLUB ROOM brings us help and ideas for Atari clubs. If your group has managed some hurdle or solved a common problem in an innovative way, share it with Z*NET.]*

I have an illness. Nothing serious, but it's really becoming a pain. The symptoms? Mention the word "AtariFest" and I get nervous, shaky, a deep burning in my wallet, and finally a bad case of the runs (run to Detroit, run to Toronto, run to Chicago...)

I guess I'm just a sucker for these shows. It's even more fun to have them in a city with a lot of other tourist attractions so I can plan a vacation around it. The recent World of Atari show in California was the most fun I ever had!

There are usually several user groups who have booths at these shows. I love to swap information on how they run their meetings, look over their libraries, and just chat about computers. A well organized AtariFest will also have a number of seminars on a variety of topics. I always learn something new!

But the main attraction of these shows are the vendors. Here is your chance to meet well known developers like David Small, Tom Harker, and Atari executives too. The last show I attended, the dealer marked down a whole table of software to 75% off the retail price! These savings alone can pay for a trip to a show.

Are you interested in hosting an AtariFest? It's not easy. Here are some tips that I have picked up from doing our own AtariFests, from being involved in the user group part of the Dearborn World Of Atari Show, and from attending several other Atari shows around the country. First, let me mention that ST-World is planning a number of shows around the country and just might be willing to host a show in your city. Give them a call first, as the World of Atari shows are outstanding AND require comparatively little work from the user group!

If you do plan to do a show yourself, start your plans many months in advance, even a full year is not too early! If you wait until the last minute, dealers will already have commitments, or you may find that national events are conflicting. Divide the work- it simply will not work to have 3-4 people doing all of the work. This is exactly what destroyed the Chicago show a few years ago, and hampered others in the past. If you don't have enough dedicated volunteers at this time, don't proceed!

You will need to locate an appropriate room for your show. You should plan for, at the very least, a 6,000 square foot room. A room too small will result in isles too narrow, and a room too big will give the impression the organizers couldn't sell enough booths. Although civic centers are big and convenient for your visitors, they are expensive and harder on the vendors who must get transportation between hotel rooms and the show site. Most hotels will give your show guests generous discounts on their hotel rooms if you use their hall facilities for your show, but they are often too small.

Some very successful shows are held in schools, shopping malls, and other locations. The advantage is that they don't cost you anything, but you loose some of the "pizzazz" of a big show. This is an excellent way to start out though. Get some of the other local computer clubs to join

in. Another advantage is that some shopping centers will help you with publicity.

Always keep a professional approach. Remember, you are asking vendors to spend several hundred dollars in travel, lodging, and shipping expenses to attend your show, not to mention the booth rental! They won't attend unless they think you can produce many hundreds of people. Put a lot of thought into your dealer packages, and send each vendor a complete package. Take advantage of the bulk mailing permits! Sending 200 packages at bulk rate is cheaper than sending 100 by first class! Use this method to send flyers to user groups too. Don't forget to ask Atari for some help too, like handouts, bumper stickers, and maybe even a sales rep or two.

Now the hard part begins. You MUST gather all of your volunteers together and divide up the work, and set a preliminary budget. Vendor rates can range from as low as \$35 a table to many hundreds for a "standard" 10' x 10' booth, depending on the facility and probable attendance. Plan your show so that most everything is paid for from the booth rentals and other promotions, and depend on the "gate" admissions for profits and unforeseen bills.

One of your big expenses will be printing: posters, tickets, flyers, programs, and dealer packages. Try to get a bid from a printer on the entire package instead of letting one printer do tickets and another doing posters. A rule of thumb that I have heard from professional show people: plan to spend a dollar in advertising for every three you expect to earn at the door. User groups may be able to do better on less advertising money if all avenues of free exposure are used well.

Try to contact those people involved in past Atari shows, and find out what problems they had, or what they did right. You can eliminate a whole bunch of headaches by catching these problems in advance. One example is in supplying electricity. Such things as not enough outlets, outlets too far away from the booths (vendors needed to get extension cords at the last minute), poor engineering that put too many booths on the same circuit resulting in blown fuses, and no telephone hookups. My first mall show had a problem too. The vendor asked me where the outlet was, so I asked the mall's electrician. He pointed up and said "up there". Yup, there it was, 45 feet straight up in the ceiling was the outlet.

Don't overlook the small details! Ever try to unload a van full of computer parts by hand and carry them across a large convention center? Arrange to supply some hand carts! What about food? Got enough tables and chairs? Find out what the local union requirements are. Some of their rules can be extremely expensive, and could even end up canceling your show. One past show had a city requirement that said you needed a paramedic on duty. Well, guess what union decided to go on strike the week of the show?

Insurance, security, tourist information, volunteers during the show, vendors requesting to borrow equipment are just a few of the problems you need to address well in advance. The list goes on and on. I took pride in my role in the Atari-Magic show as the official "Chicken Little". I would look for everything that could possibly go wrong. I'm sure some of the others on our committee didn't always appreciate me, but many of the things I brought up actually did happen, and we were ready for them! ■

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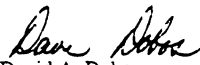
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PUBLIC DOMAIN REPORT

by Alice Amore and Harold Brewer

STALKER (ST)

STALKER is a new terminal emulator accessory. The demo version was used for review. STALKER features the ability to run itself from within any GEM application. Thus, you can use any GEM program while online. If you do a lot of up/downloading, you can continue using your ST while the file transfer proceeds. Supported are ASCII, XMODEM, XMODEM-1k (YMODEM), and YMODEM-Batch protocols. Also: ANSI and VT52 escape sequences, an autodialer holding 40 numbers, an automatic cash/time-online clock, 20 user-configurable function keys, and a scroll-back buffer.

THE HIDDEN FORTRESS (ST)

FORTRESS is an arcade-style game that's enjoyable, though a little difficult. It's a conversion from the 8-bit by Electric Software's Brandon Clark. The ST version is by Ronald McDaniel. In FORTRESS, you steer your Land Rover through the catacombs of a hidden fortress while avoiding acidic slime pools, sharp spikes, and DNA-replicating walls. THE HIDDEN FORTRESS is public domain and absolutely free. The authors would appreciate your feedback.

MAILPRO (ST)

MAILPRO (version 4 series), from Hi-Tech Advisors, is a full-fledged filing and mail-merge system with versions available for the Atari ST and the IBM PC. The available demo limits the user to entering 50 items or less, but is otherwise complete. One nice thing about MAILPRO is the ability it has to assemble a data file which can then be merged with your word processing program in order to create form letters. As many as 999 "blank areas" can be exported for each letter that you compose.

PRINTIT and VIEWIT (ST)

PRINTIT and VIEWIT are two PrintMaster-related utilities written by Raymond Roux. These programs work in low, medium or high resolution. You must have at least 273,000 free memory bytes for running PRINTIT. PrintMaster graphic icons are sent to the printer in much the same way as in PM_CAT, but without title pages. But, unlike PM_CAT, VIEWIT lets the user pause between screens of icons. There are 12 icons shown per screen. A status line at the bottom of the screen shows the number of icons in the library, and allows paging up and down to previous screens and proceeding screens. Page numbers are shown to help you keep track of the library size.

CB_FINAL (ST)

ColorBurst II, version 1.2, by Peter and Andrew Beerv, is the last version of this color painting program that will be offered. In low resolution, 3200 color shades are available, and in medium resolution, 800 shades. A toolbox containing icons is used to enable the drawing functions which include mirror image, vertical flip, spray color, boxes, circles, cut, fill, shrink, enlarge, and more. The style/color menu allows selection of line width, line style, fill pattern, text size, spray and stipple, and, of course, pen color, which is a treat in itself as there are so many colors to choose from. Ten screen buffers are stored in the F1-F10 keys, each with its own palette. There is no documentation file included with this program. However, there are help menus within the program accessed through the HELP key. CB_FINAL also imports D.E.G.A.S. and NEOchrome

pictures. The program is GEM-based and allows you to run other programs from within it.

OMVARCDV (ST)

ARCshells make the work of ARCing and extracting files much easier, but how many of us really use all of the excellent features of the ARC utility or our favorite ARCshell? John Blakely has written OMVARCDV, a program which does nothing but view and extract ARChives. This is a joy to use if you have an abundance of ARCDed files in your directories and have better things to do than type in each filename from the .TTP box, or load a huge ARCshell. Using OMVARCDV is quick and simple. Almost all functions can be handled by mouse. When extracting files, it is possible to specify "*" (all files), "NNN*" (all files with a string of characters in their filename), or ".NNN" (all files with the same extension).

BobTerm

A New 8-bit Terminal Program

I've been modeming with my 65c02 Atari since 1986, and have experienced several 8-bit terminal programs: XE-Term, HomeTerm, Express!, Amodem, DeTerm, and GrafTerm—they all stick in my memory for their own reasons, be they good or bad. The heart of my terminal setup consists of Amodem 7.52, the BASIC XE cartridge and its FAST command, SpartaDOS X, and a Supra Modem 2400. I have been extremely happy with Amodem's 28K buffer, several file transfer protocols, programmable macro keys, and more. But when the author of Disk Communicator and Super ARC! released his own shareware terminal program, I couldn't wait to see what Bob Puff's BobTerm could do.

I like a large terminal program buffer. Even though BobTerm's buffer isn't as big as I am used to (17K for BobTerm and SpartaDOS X), it is sizeable enough to keep me from worrying about too-frequent hard drive access. To most 65c02 Atari modemers (or so I've heard), BobTerm's buffer is the biggest they have dealt with.

A terminal program isn't complete in my eyes unless it offers Xmodem, Xmodem CRC, and 1K Xmodem (Ymodem). I love Ymodem batch protocol, but if a program has other good points, I'll overlook the disparity. Amodem 7.52 has all these protocols available (except for Ymodem batch upload), and I have considered myself fortunate. But BobTerm simply blows Amodem's doors off with offering all the above protocols along with Ymodem batch upload, Fmodem batch (sends/receives 4-1K blocks before a checksum) and CIS Fast Xmodem.

Logging on bulletin boards with the accompanying queries for name, password, blood type, etc., can become nerve racking. With Amodem, the user has certain keys designated as macros, which can send alphanumeric data, along with ATASCII/ASCII carriage returns, pauses for a certain character or time span, and more. One-key logons at the pay services and local boards are a pleasure. BobTerm embraces this macro ability for further ease in bulletin board communication.

I could go on extolling BobTerm's virtues, like its superior edit window, large phone lists, and machine language quickness, but I'll leave that (and all I've commented upon) for another to continue in an upcoming ZMagazine issue. To give BobTerm a try, look for this shareware program on the pay services and finer bulletin boards nationwide. ■

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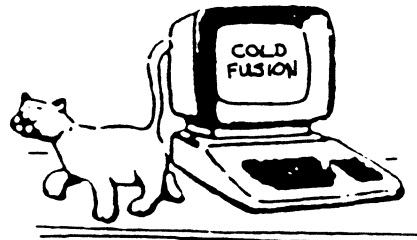
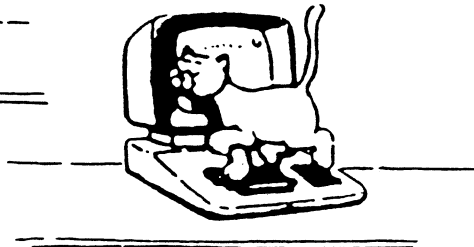
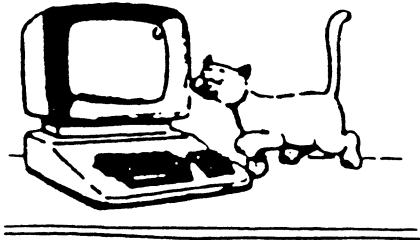
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- **Slapp News - Ontario, Canada**
St. Lawrence Atari Players and Programmers (SLAPP)
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by Brian Goluska (CHAOS)





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AB Zoo	21	Cyber Paint	48
Advanced OCP Art Studio	31	Cyber VCR	45
Air Ball	26	Dark Castle	27
Air Ball Construction Set	17	Data Manager ST	46
Algebra 1, 2, 3	ea 14	Dataview	33
Aliants	19	DB Man	149
All About America	41	Death Sword	13
Alli	21	Deep Space	31
Alternate Reality-The City	32	Defender of the Crown	31
Alternate Reality-The Dungeon	32	Degas Elite	38
America Cooks Series	ea 9	Demon's Winter	25
Architectural Design	19	Desk Cart	67
Arctic Fox	26	Digi Drum	14
Art Gallery 1, 2, 3	ea 19	Dive Bomber	19
Assem Pro	37	Dr. Drums (DR T)	19
Autoduel	24	Dr. Keys (DR T)	19
Award Maker	27	Drafix	129
Balance of Power	32	Dungeon Master 2	18
Bally Hoo	27	Dyna Cadd	429
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Base Two	45	Easy Tools	32
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Bubble Ghost	24	First Shapes	25
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Cad 3D (Ver. 2.0)	57	Flash (Great!)	18
Calamus	175	Flight Simulator 2	32
Calamus Font Editor	62	Scenery Disks	ea 18
Captain Blood	31	Font Disks (Pub Part) 1-6	ea 20
Carrier Command	29	Fonts and Borders	26
Certificate Maker	25	Fontz ST	26
Championship Baseball	27	Foundations Waste	26
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Charpak	34	G + Plus	21
Chessmaster 2000	29	Gateway	31
Chrono Quest	29	Gauntlet	31
Circuit Maker 2	63	Genesis (Molecular Modeler)	59
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N Vision	29	Spy vs Spy 3 (Arctic Antics)	19
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